

**US Fish and Wildlife Service - US Department of Energy
Interagency Agreement for Activities at Upton Ecological and Research Reserve
Brookhaven National Laboratory**

Fiscal Year 2001 Accomplishments

Fiscal year 2001 was a time of gearing up operations at BNL and the Upton Ecological and Research Reserve.

Administration:

Two biologists hired to work on the program, Peter Kelly and Charles Andrew (Andy) Harrison, entered on duty on July 30, and September 10, 2001, respectively. Arrangements were made to provide office space for Pete and Andy in building 120, at BNL. The Service biologists have been badged and received an employee orientation to BNL. We purchased field sampling equipment and office equipment, including the following: pickup truck, binoculars, digital camera, computers and GIS software, printer, office chairs. As of 7/31, \$52,980 was spent on equipment, salaries, and contracts.

Reserve Management:

The Service executed a contract with the Conservation Management Institute (CMI) at Virginia Polytechnic Institute to map the vegetation communities at BNL and prepare a GIS cover-type layer. This project will cost \$14,979. CMI visited the lab in mid-September and completed ground-truthing. A completed map products are expected in January 2002.

Boundary signs were designed for the Reserve and 500 were purchased for \$1,100. Posting will begin in early October 2001.

A draft fire management plan for the entire BNL property was completed on September 28, 2001, and forwarded to members of the Technical Advisory Group.

Research:

In mid-June, we mailed a request-for-proposals to more than 35 academic institutions involved with pine barrens-related research. We received three proposals, of which the TAG found two worthy of funding. The funded projects involve measuring the stress to oak trees associated with repeated defoliation (as occurs during insect infestations and with frost) and the study of the effects of fire and nutrients on the invasion of exotic plants. The “stressor” project was submitted by Dowling College and will be funded at \$14,790. The “invasive species” project was submitted by SUNY Stony Brook at \$187,116 over a three-year period.

Education/Outreach:

The Service agreed to contribute \$7,000 in funding for Suffolk Community College's Center for Community Research to instruct high school and college students in environmental sampling and prepare a natural resources inventory for the Peconic River study area.

The Service prepared posters summarizing three studies of Pine Barrens-related ecological topics for the annual Pine Barrens Research Forum, hosted by BNL.

Technical Advisory Group:

A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was formed in December 2000. Membership of the TAG consists of the Pine Barrens Commission, Suffolk County Parks, Recreation, and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), NY State Department of Environmental Conservation, BSA, and the Service. The TAG met March 23, June 21, and August 16, 2001. During these meetings, team members toured the Reserve, were introduced to the principles of fire ecology and management, were briefed on the current status of the natural resources management plan, and developed and ranked research proposals submitted under our Request for Proposals.

Staff Training:

In late August, Biologist Pete Kelly served a two-week tour on a western wildfire detail. In addition to helping meet a nation-wide request for firefighters, this experience provided Pete with a more complete knowledge of working around fire, a skill that will prove useful in both prescribed burning and responding to wildfires at BNL.